Triangulating Our Vision. Edited by Corine Schleif. *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives in Medieval Art.* Editor-in-Chief, Rachel Dressler. Vol. 1. http://differentvisions.org/one.html.

The welcome inaugural issue of *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives in Medieval Art* features papers originally given at the Forty-first International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in 2006, as part of five incredibly well-attended sessions created to honor Madeline Caviness's work.[1] Although first conceived as contributions to these conference sessions, the articles in this issue come together to offer a wide range of approaches by scholars at various stages of their careers, and this diversity reflects well the goals of the journal. Placing the work of senior scholars such as Caviness and Linda Seidel alongside that of mid-career authors and emerging scholars provides an important opportunity to the latter while helping to develop the visibility and stature of a new journal. Meanwhile, the decision to have Kathleen Biddick, a historian, write the issue's conceptual introduction (a more traditional introduction by Corine Schleif follows), and the inclusion of long-time Caviness collaborator and German studies scholar Charles Nelson's work, support the journal's cross-disciplinary approach to medieval art.

The issue begins with an exploration of the personal and the pleasurable. Biddick's opening essay offers a collage of ideas—enjoyment, personal investment, the importance of scholarly relationships, theory—based on an interview with Madeline Caviness, whose "triangulatory" approach to medieval art is the focus of the issue. (The interview was conducted by Biddick in 2006 and is also included in the issue.) The choice to open this issue (and the journal) with reflections based on an interview efficiently asserts two important things. First, it creates a first-person tone that immediately pushes us into Caviness's motivations and ways of thinking—a feminist strategy that, incidentally, asserts the importance of relationships at all levels of scholarly development. Second, this approach clearly demonstrates that this journal aims to subvert scholarly norms. As Caviness herself discusses in both the interview and her "Response" included in the issue, there remain too few venues for provocative, controversial, or adventurous work. *Different Visions* has the potential to serve as such a venue.

The significance of the journal's scholarly project is paralleled by the importance of Caviness's work. She continues, despite her retirement, to develop a remarkable legacy of commitment to both scholarship and mentoring. This issue of *Different Visions* succeeds in merging a variety of perspectives on her work, those that are very subjective (from both her and the other contributors)

as well as those inspired by her intellectual sophistication and sense of adventure. As a group these essays successfully show the remarkably different ways in which Caviness's work has influenced the field. Several authors engage directly with her triangulatory approach (bringing together contemporary theory, historical context, and the present-day interpreter), often focusing on the role of theory in their arguments, while others reference her methodologies more loosely. Several authors' subject matter also reflects Caviness's scholarly oeuvre, including stained glass, gender and sexuality, and eroticism.

For those who, like me, thoroughly enjoyed Caviness's entertaining plenary talk at Kalamazoo (also in 2006), you will be rewarded here with a more fleshed-out version of her argument (pun very much intended) in "From Self-Invention of the Whiteman in the Thirteenth Century to *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*." Caviness's essay, as well as several others in this volume, demonstrate clearly one of the significant benefits of an online journal for art history: images! The opportunity to include many more images than in the average print article, and for them to be in color, presents a visually spectacular volume. At the same time, this exciting component has the potential to undermine the focus of some of the contributions. Indeed, several of the most successful essays are also the most focused. Anne F. Harris's study of the depictions of shoemakers at Chartres, in which she considers the stained glass window as a "thing" offered within a new commercial economy, works in part because she homes in on a very specific set of questions prompted by a small set of images and her engagement with Heidegger. Linda Seidel's short but eloquent essay on Adam and Eve in the Ghent Altarpiece succeeds precisely because in it she attempts a rather modest assertion: that these two bodies warrant a closer look. Like Harris, Seidel also capitalizes on a focused theoretical position—in her case, arguing for the value of formalism—that facilitates well her reading of these images.

Although some of the essays feel a bit unruly, the journal's mission to support exploratory and adventurous studies will necessarily result in a wider range of approaches than we might see in a more conventional publication, and this is to be commended. Every article ostensibly engages with Caviness's triangulatory approach, though some do so more overtly than others. It might be more precise to state that this volume showcases new methodologies that offer new questions and ways of thinking that are often more provocative than definitive or provable. While some pieces reflect the pitfalls of too literally "applying" theories, often from other fields, to one's visual material, the journal also provides a venue for new art historical approaches that can and will make significant contributions to medieval studies more broadly.

For example, in his essay on the representational strategies evident in a diagram of female anatomy, Karl Whittington makes an important argument for the "flexibility of an image's interpretation," even when such interpretations may be impossible to prove. Sarah Bromberg asserts that the images in the Rothschild Canticles encourage multiple readings that coexist simultaneously, an argument that has great potential if not quite enough support here. For Rachel Dressler, tomb effigies "depend upon the beholder's gaze to activate them," a function that she argues is notably different from traditional narrative imagery. In her broad exploration of "lesser-known" images that might be considered erotic, Martha Easton asks important questions about how the potential eroticism of images might be linked to medieval and later audience responses. Corine Schleif's piece serves as both "Introduction or Conclusion" and an essay in its own right, a strategy that seems to undermine the focus of both sections while creating interesting connections as well. Her essay brings together a wide range of material as she argues for a return to historical, archival work in her piece on the fifteenth-century Ehenheim Epitaph, a laudable position that scholars of earlier material might find more difficult to achieve.

The journal comes at a great time, when open access and digital technologies are available to facilitate publishing endeavors, like this one, that aim to democratize and even revolutionize traditional scholarship—facets of this volume that are also reflected in the work of Madeline Caviness. As her scholarship has so often shown, pleasure, even humor, can and should be at the center of cutting-edge work, the kind of work that *Different Visions* promises to support in the future.

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NOTE

1. Many of the other presenters contributed essays to a festschrift, *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness*, edited by Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Pastan, and Ellen M. Shortell (Ashgate, 2009).